



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR MOBILITY COMMAND

9 June 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL AMC PERSONNEL

FROM: AMC/CC

SUBJECT: SECAF and CSAF Resignations – A Call to Return to Basics

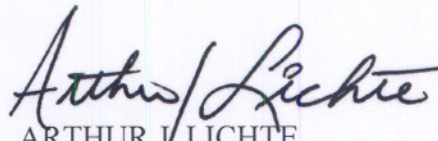
1. Last week, our Air Force and Nation learned that our Secretary and Chief of Staff will soon step down from their leadership posts. In resigning, they accepted responsibility and held themselves accountable for recent Air Force mission failures. In accepting their resignations, the Secretary of Defense praised Secretary Wynne's and General Moseley's dedication, courage, and devoted service to our Nation. He also pointed out, though, that we have a lot of work to do to return the Air Force to the standards of excellence for which we have long been known and respected.
2. There are a number of lessons we, as Air Mobility Airmen, must learn from this sad and unfortunate episode in our Air Force's history. Unless we turn this occasion into an opportunity to improve ourselves, our mission focus, and our service to our Nation, we risk continuing the failures that brought us to this difficult moment.
3. We, the Air Force, failed our Secretary and Chief. By taking our eye off the ball – by failing to focus on our core missions – we allowed some very embarrassing events to occur. Although the Secretary of Defense expressed particular disappointment in the Air Force's stewardship of nuclear weapons and equipment, his concerns must be a wake-up call to all Airmen. I am extremely proud of all AMC Airmen – active duty, Reserve, Air National Guard, and civilians – and the amazing and outstanding work you do; however, we can't afford to rest on our laurels and become complacent. We must continue to focus on doing our jobs right. There are no acceptable shortcuts; excellence depends on each Airman doing his or her job by the book.
4. We need to return to basics. Returning to basics means leaders must lead. The Secretary and Chief have given us a final example of what it means to be a leader: Leaders accept responsibility for the mission and the Airmen who perform it. Leaders hold themselves and their subordinates accountable for actions that detract from our mission. The acronym, FIDO – "fix it and drive on" – should become part of every Airman's vocabulary. If you see a problem and can fix it, do so. If the problem is beyond your expertise or authority, report it to your supervisor, let him or her lead, and then be the best wingman you can be. Ultimately, if you're a leader – whether an officer, senior NCO, NCO, or civilian – your most important objective is to foster a culture in which all Airmen feel responsible for themselves, their wingmen, and their mission. We arrived at this difficult moment because we failed to achieve that objective.

5. Returning to basics also means examining all aspects of our missions and resolving to do them better. The aircraft maintainer who methodically applies Tech Orders returns to basics. The flying crewmember who follows checklists returns to basics. Airmen who provide customer service return to basics when they put the customer's concerns ahead of their own. Whatever our job, we know the standards of excellence we're expected to achieve. The Secretary and Chief invested a lot of time, energy, and resources to establish AFSSO 21 as one key way of making our Air Force better. As our final salute to them, I challenge all AMC Airmen to look every day for opportunities to improve our Air Force.

6. Finally, we need to restore pride in our Air Force. We can be proud of our Secretary's and Chief's legacy. We would honor that legacy by focusing in the days ahead on the sacred trust our Nation has placed in us. As our Airman's Creed reminds us, we "have answered our Nation's call." That call demands we remain "faithful to a proud heritage, a tradition of honor, and a legacy of valor." There is no room in that call for feeling sorry for ourselves. There is no room in that call for becoming defensive and blaming others for our problems. Our comrades in arms deployed worldwide and in harm's way rely on AMC to provide professional, timely, and precise global airlift, air refueling, and aeromedical evacuation. There is no room in our mission for anything less than our total commitment. We need to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and move out with renewed resolve and pride. We owe it to ourselves; we owe it to our Nation.

7. Today, Secretary Gates nominated Mr. Michael Donley and General Norton Schwartz as our next Secretary and Chief. We look forward to their confirmation and pledge our support as they lead our Air Force.

8. In his resignation statement, General Moseley said, "the Air Force is bigger than one Airman." He's right; the Air Force is a team. However, without each Airman working with his or her fellow Airman to achieve our common goals, the Air Force is not as big, effective, or proud as it can be. The Air Force is bigger than one Airman, but we in AMC know that the departure of Secretary Wynne and General Moseley leaves big gaps in our formation. It's up to us to help Mr. Donley and General Schwartz fill them. We can do it, but only if we become better leaders and wingmen ourselves.


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Commander